



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

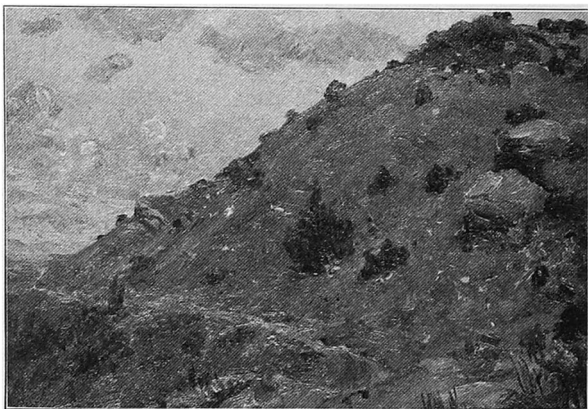
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



THE TRAIL, NEAR TAOS, N. M., BY J. H. SHARP

ART CONDITIONS IN CHICAGO AND OTHER WESTERN CITIES

When the World's Fair and its complement, the World's Congresses, closed in Chicago, there were found secreted in its social life the germs of every enterprise and organization that had been given space and voice within its wide and ample folds. Out of the chaotic growth that immediately started up in the alluvia from the mass of ideas with which the city had been flooded, there was much that failed through lack of environment as well as latent force. But the flower of art had a happier fate than that which befell so many of its fellows, for, inspired by the splendid inflorescence of the parent stock, kindly and propitious influences have been at work nourishing and cherishing this tender plant which has been until lately almost an exotic in American soil.

The art conditions of Chicago and the territory tributary to it from the great North, South, and middle West, are different from those that obtain in the New England and Eastern States. For years the East has had its art schools and art exhibitions; Cincinnati and St. Louis also have had the advantage of years of art study, while art in Chicago is scarcely a decade old.

The Columbian Exposition was the scene of the real birth of art in the great metropolis and its sister cities of the West. Freed as they are from the trammels of tradition and conventionalism, the art of the West is setting its own pace and developing through its own strong, free, and energizing young life the democratic idea of art.

Many artists, lured from abroad by the tempting offers of work and generous remuneration during the World's Fair, were left stranded in a new, strange, and apparently unsympathetic country after their labors were ended. They had hoped to create an art atmosphere and at once build up a kingdom. Art does not grow that way; it cannot be forced. It is not objective, but is, if successful, subjective, responding to the demands of the people, growing out of their need for an ideal. So one by one the artists left, and their going caused unfriendly criticism to be cast at Chicago, but those who were courageous, those who had faith, those who were willing to sacrifice their self-esteem and their egotism remained, and these, together with the younger artists who are growing up and graduating from the art schools, are building on the bed-rock a foundation that will stand through generations.

Among the many very powerful and positive influence: that are constantly bearing on the growth of art in our Western cities, an influence felt and appreciated by the artist, is that exerted by the women's clubs. When we realize that in nearly every small town, as well as the larger ones, there is a women's club, and that in their departments of work great prominence is given to education and to art, we need not wonder at the general intelligence, the hunger and thirst for art that is manifested on every hand.

The art life of Chicago is peculiarly dependent upon the women's clubs of the city. The Arché Club is a club famed for its original, progressive, and liberal spirit, and, the year following the close of the World's Fair, began holding salons for artists and making it a gala day memorable in the annals of club life. Exhibitions of the work of Chicago artists were made at the club's hall, and prizes were awarded. The artists became known to the public, their pictures found purchasers, receptions were tendered them elsewhere, and by such means they have become more identified with the social life of the city.

The idea of the salon became so popular that other clubs followed in the footsteps of the Arché, and during the last season many of the prize pictures were bought and placed on the walls of organizations identified with the clubs.

The Chicago Art Association, founded in October, 1897, is a direct result of this interest in art matters by the women's clubs, of which over forty are now federated in the work. Besides delegates from these various clubs, the membership is made up of associate members and artists. The aim of the association is "to promote the interests of art in all its forms in the city of Chicago; to foster a love for the arts, and to encourage Chicago artists. The association hopes also to forward its cause by promoting art in the public schools, establishing courses of lectures in the arts, encouraging the placing of statuary in the public parks; correcting the abuse of public advertising, and otherwise improving the external aspects of the city."

Many clubs belonging to the Chicago Art Association give receptions at the Art Institute during the annual exhibition of the works of Chicago artists, the attendance being very large—reaching as high as one thousand six hundred persons at one reception, while the purchase of pictures by clubs amounted to one thousand two hundred dollars in 1898. The results of the work of this association, representing as it does so many different phases of cosmopolitanism, cannot but be most practical and beneficial and react in a wholesome manner on the civic life of Chicago.

The Art Institute, with its attendance of nearly two thousand pupils, its splendid collections and library, is by no means a lay figure in molding public taste and opinion. The character of its exhibits is all the while changing, and receptions are held for members as each new exhibit is shown to the public. The social life at this central home of the art interests of Chicago is delightfully free and independent, the air is charged with a welcome which is warm and sincere.

The Altrua Library Association is a unique organization which had its birth in the Klio Club. It was founded by young women who believe that art education is one of the important factors in truest development. This club has one of the finest art libraries in the West, a gift to its members by a cultured and brilliant Chicago woman, who is intensely interested in the spread of art among the people. In this library, which is a free home for every woman in the city, the spirit of art speaks from everything collected there. There are casts of the choicest sculpture on walls and pedestals, there are photographs of the pictures of old masters, there is a touch here and a touch there which speaks the gospel of beauty. There is a collection of over three thousand photographs and a series of choice pictures given by a class of girls from a private school. These pictures circulate as do the books, and many a bare wall in a poor home or hospital has been brightened, and many a beauty-starved soul been gladdened for the two weeks that the picture has been loaned.

During the winter season the woman whose brain conceived this work gives a course of free lectures on art, illustrated by photographs of the various schools. These lectures are listened to with absorbing and intelligent interest by women of varying ages, mental growth, and environment.

Teachers in the public schools studying along the line of art—and there are many such—patronize the Altrua library, and have organized themselves into a Saturday Art Club, which has done much sincere and earnest study through the leadership of the founder of the library.

One very important result of the interest the teachers of the West are taking in the study of art is the decoration of schoolrooms with casts and pictures. The teachers are ably assisted in their efforts by the women's clubs, which decorate schools in their neighborhood.

Sometimes an individual member arranges a memorial room for a son or a daughter who had at one time attended the school.

This idea of making the schools pleasant and homelike is full of promise, and with the coöperation of boards of education who color the walls, ceilings, and woodwork according to the most artistic and approved scientific idea of color, the task of placing the decorations is a comparatively easy one, and with results vastly more satisfactory. With the proper color background, even a simple and inexpensive decoration can be made effective.

Schools in many of the cities within a radius of a few hundred miles of Chicago are paying much attention to the decoration of their classrooms. In Aurora, a beautiful little town about thirty miles away, the art spirit runs high. The children have caught the inspiration, and they themselves meet the expenses of decorating the schools, each child being allowed to give not more than a penny a week. From this tiny offering the fund during the last school year has amounted to over six hundred dollars. In one of the large schools of Chicago one thousand two hundred dollars has been raised through a literary and musical entertainment given by the pupils.

In Omaha, where during the past summer the beautiful and successful Trans-Mississippi Exposition was held, the teachers and women of the various clubs have organized and are doing valiant service for art. The school buildings are in themselves models of their kind, with latest devices for good sanitation, plenty of sunshine, the walls artistically tinted in green, on which are placed good pictures and casts. The teachers have numerous art clubs, and are studying with a zest and vigor for a deeper and broader intelligence, which is so reflected in their work that the schools of Omaha take rank among the leading schools of the great Trans-Mississippi section.

While the study of art is not so pronounced a feature in the schools of Kansas City, an art influence is developing through many agencies, chief among which is the public library, lately housed in one of the most beautiful library buildings and managed by one of the most intelligent librarians either of the East or of the West. In the Library building is an art gallery in which statuary and reproductions of some of the masterpieces of sculpture are arranged. Art exhibits are held in apartments set aside for the purpose, and the art clubs of the city have rooms where they can read and study and hold meetings undisturbed. For years the librarian has been planning ways and means toward making the children's department one of the popular features and one truly educative. It is furnished with low tables and small chairs, and there is an attendant whose sole duty is to look after the reading of the children and advise and assist them in the selection of books. It has its own card catalogue, and on Saturdays, national holidays, and the birthdays of noted men and women all the books pertaining to the subject to be studied and pictures illustrating

it are laid on the tables and hung about the room. Pictures are abundantly supplied, the child is appealed to by the things he loves best, the art side of his nature is developed unconsciously, and the hard problem of linking the library directly with the work of the school is happily solved.

An appreciation for art is one of the marked characteristics of the St. Louis schools. In so complex a system as must be that of a great city, there are varying degrees of enthusiasm, but with the pronounced art spirit that has been active with the citizens of St. Louis for so long, its schools are now bearing fruit. Here, also, the women's clubs, composed of teachers and other women workers for the city's best interests, flourish, and among these women the correlation of art with the school curriculum finds its truest and warmest advocates. The decoration of the school with pictures and casts, the tinting of the walls with a color that bears scientific criticism, the study of pictures in every grade from the kindergarten to the high school, the cultivation of such plants as will best thrive in schoolrooms, are some of the questions that the club women of St. Louis are grappling with to their disinterested credit and honor.

In Denver, whose schools on the whole are the most perfectly built and artistically decorated of any in the United States, the art work has been a series of successful efforts to bring the home and the school into a close and abiding unity.

In St. Paul, Minn., in fact, in all the towns, both large and small, and the country communities of the great West, the interest in art matters is full of promise, and while all classes are doing a little, it is the teacher who realizes the problem in its fullness and usefulness.

For several seasons, at the beginning of the school year, an exhibit of drawings and paintings representing every grade in the public schools from the second up and including the high school, has been held at the Art Institute, Chicago. The exhibition is composed of works in water colors, colored chalks, paper cutting, colored crayon, lead pencil, and pen and ink, and covers the walls of three large rooms. Thousands of delighted people inspected the products of the children's genius and skill, and the young draughtsmen themselves swarmed through the beautiful building in eager and lively crowds.

Under such conditions as these the renaissance of democracy and a revival of the arts must come. The art of the West engages the sympathies of the people. To them it preaches the gospel of beauty with no faltering notes; it is not swathed in mystery, but grows in the clear light of day, and the spirit underlying all its teaching is, that the mission of art is one of a common humanity, belonging not to a dead past as a fetish to be worshipped, but a vital factor in a living present, with a message of service and an uplift of power.

IDA M. CONDIT.